

Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils

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Councillor David Pugh
Leader of the IW Council
County Hall
Newport IW

March 22nd 2013

Dear Councillor Pugh

Following last night's meeting of the Executive Committee of the IW Association of Local Councils it was decided to write to you urgently to ask that the IW Council reconsider the restructuring of the Coastal Management Team which would lead to the disbanding of this critical staff group

We were informed that the Coastal Management Team would be lost in its current format from April 15th making the Principal Engineer redundant and allocating the other officers to Roads, Recreation and Planning. We understand that four officers made the decision without any right of appeal and not even a hearing.

Members of our Executive Committee reminded us that the Coastal Management Team is a "centre of excellence" which has brought additional funding to the Island through the international importance of the work it has undertaken. Data from the team is part of the global geography curriculum. Ventnor is the largest urban landslip in NW Europe. The Island's 100km of coastline is its greatest tourist asset. Erosion is a great threat to coastal property and public access. The UK Government recognises the importance of this work with a grant of £350-500,000 per year. Obtaining property insurance in PO38 is already difficult but how much worse will it be at a time of increasing landslips due to the extreme weather combined with the dissolution of the team of experts who monitor the 40% of the Island's defended coastline?

IWALC urges the IW Council to halt this decision and reverse the delegated powers under which it was made so that the future of the Coastal Management Service can be considered by Councillors in a more measured manner. Given the urgency of this matter the Executive Committee called for the widest circulation of this letter.

Yours sincerely

John Medland
IWALC Secretary.

cc. CLG
Richard Benyon MP @ DEFRA
Andrew Turner MP
All Elected Members of the Isle of Wight Council
IWALC member councils
South Today
Isle of Wight County Press
Isle of Wight Radio
On the Wight
IW Beacon